

We claim:

1. A protective housing assembly for releasably storing optical media,  
when stored therein, the optical media maintained in isolation from ambient  
environmental conditions, the optical media of first diametrical dimensions, said  
5 protective housing assembly comprising:

a housing base member of dimensions at least corresponding to the first  
diametrical dimensions of the optical media, said housing base member for  
supportively engaging the optical media thereat;

a housing cover member positionable upon said housing base member, such  
10 that, when positioned thereat, and when the optical media is engaged at said base  
housing member, said housing cover member and said housing base member together  
define an enclosure that encloses the optical media; and

an evacuator at least engageable in fluid connectivity with the enclosure  
defined by said housing base member together with said housing cover member  
15 when positioned thereon, said evacuator for evacuating air out of the enclosure to a  
selected level of vacuum, thereby to maintain the optical media in the isolation from  
the ambient environmental conditions.

2. The protective housing assembly of claim 1 wherein the optical media  
20 comprises at least a first optical media disc, and wherein said housing base member  
comprises a base member inner face surface at which the first optical media disc is  
positionable in supportive engagement thereat.

3. The protective housing assembly of claim 2 wherein the first optical  
25 media disc comprises a centrally-positioned through hole of a selected radial  
dimension extending therethrough, and wherein said housing base member comprises  
a base-member spindle, the base-member spindle of radial dimensions substantially  
corresponding to the selected radial dimension of the through hole, permitting  
seating of the first optical disc member thereabout in the supportive engagement.

30

4. The supportive housing assembly of claim 3 wherein the optical media comprises the first optical media disc and at least a second optical media disc, the second optical media disc also comprising a centrally-positioned through hole of the selected radial dimension, the second optical media disc also permitting of seating  
5 about the base-member spindle in the supportive engagement.

5. The protective housing assembly of claim 2 wherein the at least the first optical media disc comprises the first optical media disc and at least a second optical media disc, and wherein said housing cover member comprises a cover-  
10 member inner face surface at which the second optical media disc is positionable in supportive engagement thereat.

6. The protective housing assembly of claim 5 wherein the second optical media disc comprises a centrally-positioned through-hole of the selected radial  
15 dimension extending therethrough, and wherein said housing cover member comprises a cover-member spindle of radial dimensions substantially corresponding to the selected radial dimension of the through hole, permitting seating of the second optical disc member thereabout in the supportive engagement.

20 7. The protective housing assembly of claim 1 further comprising a hinge connector for hingedly connecting together said housing base member and said housing cover member, relative rotation about said hinge connector positioning said housing cover member upon said housing base member, together to define the enclosure.

25

8. The protective housing assembly of claim 1 wherein at least a selected one of said housing base member and said housing cover member further comprises a perimetral flange member, said perimetral flange member for abutting against an other of said housing base member and said housing cover member when said  
30 housing base member and said housing cover member are positioned to define the enclosure.

9. The protective housing assembly of claim 8 wherein the abutting of said perimetral flange member against the other of said housing base member and said housing cover member forms an airtight seal.

5 10. The protective housing assembly of claim 9 further comprising a gasket formed at the abutting of said perimetral flange and the other of said housing base member and said housing cover member.

10 11. The protective housing assembly of claim 10 wherein the gasket is integral to at least a selected one of said perimetral flange member and the other of said housing base member and said housing cover member.

15 12. The protective housing assembly of claim 1 wherein said evacuator is manually actuable to evacuate the air out of the enclosure.

13. The protective housing assembly of claim 1 wherein said evacuator is affixed, in permanent affixation, to a selected one of said housing base member and said housing cover member.

20 14. The protective housing assembly of claim 1 wherein said evacuator is separable from said housing base and said housing cover members, respectively.

25 15. The protective housing assembly of claim 14 wherein said evacuator comprises a pump and a hose, the hose releasably connecting the pump with the enclosure defined by said housing base member together with said housing cover member.

30 16. A method for releasably storing optical media in isolation from ambient environmental conditions, the optical media of first diametrical dimensions, said method comprising:

supportively engaging the optical media at a housing base member;

covering the optical media with a housing cover member such that, when covered, the housing base member and the housing cover member define an enclosure that encloses the optical media; and

5       evacuating air out of the enclosure to form a selected level of vacuum, thereby  
to maintain the optical media in the isolation from the ambient environmental conditions.

17.     The method of claim 16 further comprising the subsequent operations of removing the cover, thereby returning the optical media out of the isolation from  
10   the environmental conditions, and releasing the optical media out of supportive engagement with the housing base member.

18.     The method of claim 16 wherein said operation of evacuating comprises pumping air out of the enclosure.  
15

19.     The method of claim 18 further comprising the operation of connecting a pump in fluid connectivity with the enclosure and wherein said operation of evacuating comprises operating the pump.

20       20.     The method of claim 19 wherein said operation of pumping comprises manually pumping the air out of the enclosure.